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said latch being pivotable to said release position allowing release of the rear tab held therein against the bias of said spring without movement of said rear main body when said rear main body is affixed to the snowboard.

51. (Amended) A snowboard binding mechanism for securing a cleat adapted to be attached to a snowboard boot to a snowboard, comprising:

a front main body adapted to be affixed to the snowboard, said front main body including a cleat receiving opening for receiving a front tab of a cleat;

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a rear main body adapted to be affixed to the snowboard;

a latch pivotally mounted to said rear main body to pivot between an engaged position and a release position, said latch including a notch for receiving a rear tab of a cleat;

a spring mounted on said rear main body, said spring arranged to bias said latch toward said engaged position;

said latch being pivotable to said release position allowing release of the rear tab held therein against the bias of said spring,

a latch securing means for preventing said latch from pivoting to said release position, wherein said latch securing means comprises:

a sliding shaft mounted on said rear main body, said sliding shaft including a head, wherein said sliding shaft is movable between: (a) a secure position wherein said head contacts said latch preventing the latch from pivoting to its release position, and (b) a free position, wherein said head is clear of the range of motion of said latch, allowing said latch to be pivoted to its release position; and

a hook mounted on said sliding shaft, said hook including a groove, and a tab mounted on said rear main body, wherein when said sliding shaft is in said secure position said groove is engaged with said tab.

53. (Amended) A snowboard binding mechanism for securing a cleat adapted to be attached to a snowboard boot to a snowboard, comprising:

a front main body adapted to be affixed to the snowboard, said front main body including a cleat receiving opening for receiving a front tab of a cleat;

a rear main body adapted to be affixed to the snowboard;

a latch pivotally mounted to said rear main body to pivot between an engaged position and a release position, said latch including a notch for receiving a rear tab of a cleat;

a spring mounted on said rear main body, said spring arranged to bias said latch toward said engaged position;

said latch being pivotable to said release position allowing release of the rear tab held therein against the bias of said spring; and

wherein said cleat receiving notch has at least one notch bevel surface for engaging with a bevel surface on said cleat to cause a force to be applied to said notch bevel surface sufficient to overcome the biasing force of said spring, thereby pivoting said latch to said release position.

55. (Amended) A snowboard binding mechanism for securing a cleat adapted to be attached to a snowboard boot to a snowboard, comprising:

a front main body adapted to be affixed to the snowboard, said front main body including a cleat receiving opening for receiving a front tab of a cleat;

a rear main body adapted to be affixed to the snowboard;

a latch pivotally mounted to said rear main body to pivot between an engaged position and a release position, said latch including a notch for receiving a rear tab of a cleat;

a spring mounted on said rear main body, said spring arranged to bias said latch toward said engaged position;

said latch being pivotable to said release position allowing release of the rear tab held therein against the bias of said spring; and

a latch axle mounted on said rear main body, wherein said latch is pivotally mounted on said latch axle and said spring is mounted on said axle.

63. (Amended) A snowboard binding mechanism for securing a cleat adapted to be attached to a snowboard boot to a snowboard, comprising:

a front main body adapted to be affixed to the snowboard, said front main body including a cleat receiving opening;

a rear main body adapted to be affixed to the snowboard;

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a latch pivotally mounted to said rear main body to pivot between an engaged position and a release position, said latch including a cleat receiving notch;

a cleat having a front tab and a rear tab, wherein said front tab is adapted to engage said cleat receiving opening in said front main body and said rear tab is adapted to engage said cleat receiving notch in said latch;

a spring mounted on said rear main body, wherein said spring is arranged to bias said latch toward said engaged position;

said latch being pivotable to said release position allowing release of said rear tab held therein against the bias of said spring; and

wherein said cleat further includes a rear portion and a front portion, said front portion being lower than said rear portion relative to said binding mechanism, wherein said front tab extends from said front portion and said rear tab extends from said rear portion.

70. (Amended) A snowboard binding mechanism for securing a cleat adapted to be attached to a snowboard boot to a snowboard, comprising:

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a front main body adapted to be affixed to the snowboard, said front main body including a cleat receiving opening;

a rear main body adapted to be affixed to the snowboard;

a latch pivotally mounted to said rear main body to pivot between an engaged position and a release position, said latch including a cleat receiving notch;

a cleat having a front tab and a rear tab, wherein said front tab is adapted to engage said cleat receiving opening in said front main body and said rear tab is adapted to engage said cleat receiving notch in said latch;

a spring mounted on said rear main body, wherein said spring is arranged to bias said latch toward said engaged position;

said latch being pivotable to said release position allowing release of said rear tab held therein against the bias of said spring; and

wherein said rear tab has a bevel surface on a bottom portion thereof, said bevel surface being engageable with said latch to force said latch to pivot to said release position as said cleat is lowered against said binding mechanism.

71. (Amended) A snowboard binding mechanism for securing a cleat adapted to be attached to a snowboard boot to a snowboard, comprising:

a front main body adapted to be affixed to the snowboard, said front main body including a cleat receiving opening;

a rear main body adapted to be affixed to the snowboard;

a latch pivotally mounted to said rear main body to pivot between an engaged position and a release position, said latch including a cleat receiving notch;

a cleat having a front tab and a rear tab, wherein said front tab is adapted to engage said cleat receiving opening in said front main body and said rear tab is adapted to engage said cleat receiving notch in said latch;

a spring mounted on said rear main body, wherein said spring is arranged to bias said latch toward said engaged position;

said latch being pivotable to said release position allowing release of said rear tab held therein against the bias of said spring; and

wherein said latch has a beveled surface on a top portion thereof engageable with said rear tab such that lowering said rear tab against said latch forces said latch to pivot to said release position.

72. (Amended) A snowboard binding mechanism for securing a cleat adapted to be attached to a snowboard boot to a snowboard, comprising:

a front main body adapted to be affixed to the snowboard, said front main body including a cleat receiving opening;

a rear main body adapted to be affixed to the snowboard;

a latch pivotally mounted to said rear main body to pivot between an engaged position and a release position, said latch including a cleat receiving notch;

a cleat having a front tab and a rear tab, wherein said front tab is adapted to engage said cleat receiving opening in said front main body and said rear tab is adapted to engage said cleat receiving notch in said latch;

a spring mounted on said rear main body, wherein said spring is arranged to bias said latch toward said engaged position;

said latch being pivotable to said release position allowing release of said rear tab held therein against the bias of said spring; and

wherein said latch has a latch bevel on a top portion thereof and said rear tab has a tab bevel on a bottom portion thereof, said latch bevel and tab bevel being engageable to pivot said latch to said release position as said cleat is lowered against said binding.

Please add the following new claims:

148. (New) A snowboard binding mechanism for securing a cleat adapted to be attached to a snowboard boot to a snowboard, comprising:

a front main body adapted to be affixed to the snowboard, said front main body including a cleat receiving opening for receiving a front tab of a cleat;

a rear main body adapted to be affixed to the snowboard;

a latch pivotally mounted to said rear main body to pivot between an engaged position and a release position, said latch including a notch for receiving a rear tab of a cleat;

a spring mounted on said rear main body, said spring arranged to bias said latch toward said engaged position;

said latch being pivotable to said release position allowing release of the rear tab held therein against the bias of said spring; and

wherein said latch pivots around an axle, wherein said axle does not move forwardly or rearwardly when said latch pivots.

149. (New) A snowboard binding mechanism as in claim 148, further comprising a latch securing means for preventing said latch from pivoting to said release position.

150. (New) A snowboard binding mechanism as in claim 149, wherein said latch securing means includes a sliding shaft mounted on said rear main body, said sliding shaft including a head, wherein said sliding shaft is movable between: (a) a secure position wherein said head contacts said latch preventing the latch from pivoting to its release position, and (b) a free position, wherein said head is clear of the range of motion of said latch, allowing said latch to be pivoted to its release position.

151. (New) A snowboard binding mechanism as in claim 150, wherein said latch securing means further includes a hook mounted on said sliding shaft, said hook including a groove, and a tab mounted on said rear main body, wherein when said sliding shaft is in said secure position and said groove is engaged with said tab.

152. (New) A snowboard binding mechanism as in claim 151, wherein said hook further includes a cord attaching means for securing a pull cord operable to disengage said groove from said tab.

153. (New) A snowboard binding mechanism for securing a cleat adapted to be attached to a snowboard boot to a snowboard, comprising:

a front main body adapted to be affixed to the snowboard, said front main body including a cleat receiving opening;

a rear main body adapted to be affixed to the snowboard;

a latch pivotally mounted to said rear main body to pivot between an engaged position and a release position, said latch including a cleat receiving notch;

a cleat having a front tab and a rear tab, wherein said front tab is adapted to engage said cleat receiving opening in said front main body and said rear tab is adapted to engage said cleat receiving notch in said latch;

a spring mounted on said rear main body, wherein said spring is arranged to bias said latch toward said engaged position;

said latch being pivotable to said release position allowing release of said rear tab held therein against the bias of said spring; and

wherein said latch pivots around an axle, wherein said axle does not move forwardly or rearwardly when said latch pivots.

154. (New) A snowboard binding mechanism as in claim 153, wherein said cleat further includes a rear portion and a front portion, said front portion being lower than said rear portion relative to said binding mechanism, wherein said front tab extends from said front portion and said rear tab extends from said rear portion.

155. (New) A snowboard binding mechanism as in claim 154, further comprising a boot including an outsole, said outsole including a bottom surface and a recess formed therein, wherein said cleat is affixed to said boot within said recess such that said cleat is farther from the snowboard than said bottom surface.

156. (New) A snowboard binding mechanism as in claim 155, wherein said recess includes a front bevel on said outsole, said front bevel being arranged to engage said front main body as said boot is lowered onto said binding mechanism thereby guiding said front tab into engagement with said front main body.